

THE AMERICAN ARMY IN THE BALKANS:
STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVES
AND IMPLICATIONS

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Comments pertaining to this report are invited and should be forwarded to: Director, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Ave., Carlisle, PA 17013-5244. Comments also may be conveyed directly to the author by calling (717) 245-3822, fax (717) 245-3820, or by email at Steven.Metz@carlisle.army.mil. Copies of this report may be obtained from the Publications and Production Office by calling commercial (717) 245-4133, FAX (717) 245-3820, or via the Internet at rummelr@awc.carlisle.army.mil

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FOREWORD

Since 1995, peace operations in the Balkans have been an important part of the Army's contribution to U.S. national security. When these operations began, the Army institutionally focused on conventional warfighting. Since then, it has made significant changes to become more effective at peace operations, but this evolution continues. The goals that led the United States into the Balkans have not yet been fully realized. To meet them requires both sustained involvement in the region and continued refinement of the Army's peace operations capabilities.

In this report, Dr. Steven Metz examines U.S. strategy in the Balkans and the Army's role in it. He recommends continued U.S. involvement, consideration of a long-term American military presence in the region, and some significant changes in the role of the Army. From a broader perspective, Dr. Metz argues that, if U.S. political leaders decide that involvement in protracted peace operations will be an enduring part of American strategy, the Department of Defense should help form specialized joint and inter-agency peacekeeping organizations to augment the existing military. The Army should clearly play a leading role in that.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this report to help the nation continue to develop its ability to undertake peace operations to further its National Security Strategy.

DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.
Director
Strategic Studies Institute

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

STEVEN METZ became Acting Chairman, Strategy and Planning Department, in September 2000. He has been Research Professor of National Security Affairs in the Strategic Studies Institute since 1993. Dr. Metz also has held the Henry L. Stimson Chair of Military Studies at the U.S. Army War College. Prior to that, he served on the faculty of the Air War College, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and several universities. He has also served as an advisor to U.S. political organizations and campaigns, testified in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and spoken on military and security issues around the world. He is author of more than 80 articles, essays, and book chapters on such topics as nuclear war, insurgency, U.S. policy in the Third World, military strategy, South African security policy, and United Nations peace operations. Dr. Metz's current research deals with U.S. security policy toward Turkey and Pakistan. He holds a B.A. in Philosophy and a M.A. in International Studies from the University of South Carolina, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the Johns Hopkins University.

THE AMERICAN ARMY IN THE BALKANS: STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction.

When President Clinton committed U.S. ground forces to peace support operations in the Balkans, the U.S. Army was irrevocably changed. As part of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR), the Army played a vital role in helping to end the Bosnian civil war. For the Army, this was a seminal step in the transition from a tight focus on conventional warfighting to more wide-ranging support of U.S. National Security Strategy. The importance of this cannot be overestimated: the Army's successes in the Balkans have been as impressive as its combat victories in the Gulf War.

Today, though, the Army's role in the Balkans continues to evolve, driven both by conditions in that region and by shifts in American strategy. 2001 is likely to be a watershed year. With the change of presidents, the reshuffling of Congress, and the ongoing Quadrennial Defense Review, U.S. strategy in the Balkans may undergo significant change. In August 2000, Vice President-elect Dick Cheney said that it was time to consider recalling American ground troops from Kosovo and Bosnia.¹ Condoleezza Rice, one of President-elect Bush's primary national security advisers, amplified this in October, calling for a "new division of labor" in which European nations alone provide the troops for peacekeeping in their region.² And, Secretary of State-designate Colin Powell indicated that,

Our plan is to undertake a review right after the President is inaugurated, and take a look not only at our deployments in Bosnia, but in Kosovo and many other places around the world, and make sure those deployments are proper.³

It remains to be seen whether or how soon this will happen, but one thing is clear: the time is ripe for a rigorous assessment of the role of the U.S. Army in the Balkans, and of the effect the Balkans have had on the U.S. Army.⁴ As the new president refines his national security strategy and approach to the Balkans, the Army, which has the highest stake of all the Services in this process, should do four things. First, it should make the case for continued engagement in the Balkans, explaining to national political leaders that the American objectives remain valid and engagement of the U.S. military is the best way to assure that these are attained. Second, it should explore ways to be even more effective and efficient in the Balkans should the new administration opt for continued engagement. Third, should the new administration decide to disengage from the Balkans, the Army should begin to analyze ways that this can be done with minimum risk to U.S. national interests in Europe. And fourth, should national political leaders decide to make involvement in protracted peace operations an enduring mission for the U.S. military, the Army should continue to assess the wider strategic lessons drawn from its experience in the Balkans. This study is intended to provide analysis and recommendations to Army leaders on these four topics.

The Context.

The complexity and deep roots of the current Balkan conflict make framing a coherent strategy difficult. The problem grew from the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. That complex state was formed after World War I from a diverse patchwork of cultures, ethnic groups, religions, traditions and histories.⁵ There was no history of a unified and independent Yugoslavia before that time. Croatia, Slovenia, and, for a short period of time, Bosnia had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Croatia and Slovenia were predominantly Roman Catholic and culturally part of Central Europe. The southern parts of the Balkans, by contrast, had belonged to the Ottoman Empire



The Balkans.

and were more eastern in orientation. Serbia, for instance, only gained its independence in 1878 and Albania in 1912. The former was predominantly Orthodox Christian which created a cultural connection with Russia, while the latter was the only predominantly Muslim nation in Europe. This polyglot combination made Yugoslavia a fragile state from its inception with many fissures that could be manipulated by ambitious or unscrupulous political leaders.

Following World War II, Josip Broz Tito, Yugoslavia's leader, held his fractious state together through a complex system of rights and overlapping sovereignties. Yugoslavia's federal system granted near-statehood to the individual republics.⁶ This minimized the chances of ethnic competition or conflict. In the 1980s, though, Yugoslavia's economy began to falter at the same time that Tito died without leaving a successor who could manage the nation's multiple fissures. This exacerbated ethnic tensions and gave force to separatist movements. No successor to Tito emerged who could unify the parts of Yugoslavia. In 1989,

Serbia's leaders reimposed direct rule over the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina, prompting Albanians in Kosovo to agitate for independence. Between 1990 and 1992, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Macedonia all seceded from Yugoslavia, leaving Serbia and Montenegro as the constituent parts of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.⁷

Unfortunately, Serbs, who dominated Yugoslavia, were determined to preserve as much of their state as possible. As a result, the break up was tempestuous, leading to three waves of conflict and war. The first involved Yugoslavia's northern tier states: Slovenia and Croatia. When Slovenia opted for independence in 1990, Yugoslav military forces initially attempted to stop the secession but, after a short and nearly bloodless war, Yugoslav forces withdrew, leaving Slovenia to seek its economic and political future with Western Europe. The divorce between Croatia and Yugoslavia was more difficult. Soon after Croatia declared its independence in June 25, 1991, a civil war fueled by Serbian invasion broke out in the Krajina—the former Austro-Hungarian military border area settled by ethnic Croats, Germans, Hungarians, Serbs, and other Slavs. January 1992 brought a U.N.-sponsored cease-fire, but hostilities resumed the next year when Croatia fought to regain territory taken by Serbs. A second cease-fire was enacted in May 1993. In September 1993, however, the Croatian Army led an offensive against the Serb-held "Republic of Krajina." A third cease-fire was signed in March 1994, but it was broken the next May when Croatian forces again attempted to reclaim lost territory. In early August, Croatian forces recaptured Krajina with a major offensive and some 150,000 Serbs fled the region, many to Serb-held areas in Bosnia.

The conflict in Bosnia proved even bloodier and more complex. In contrast to the other Balkan states which tended to have a dominant ethnic group, Bosnia is more evenly split among ethnic Serbs (40 percent), Bosnian Muslims known as "Bosniaks" (38 percent), and ethnic Croats (22 percent).⁸ In February 1992, the Bosnian

Government held a referendum on independence, and Bosnian Serbs, supported by neighboring Serbia, responded with armed resistance in an effort to partition the republic along ethnic lines and drive other ethnic groups from the territory they controlled. In March 1994 the Bosniaks and ethnic Croats agreed to create the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, leaving two warring parties—the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska. War between them continued through most of 1995. Serb forces in particular undertook “ethnic cleansing” in the regions they controlled. Much of the combat targeted civilians (most notably during the siege of Sarajevo). Thousands of refugees left their homes in both Federation territory and the Republika Srpska. Eventually the Bosnian War became the most costly armed conflict in Europe since World War II. It was ended by extensive outside pressure and the sheer exhaustion of the combatants. The formal conclusion came with the General Framework Agreement for Peace (usually known as the Dayton Accord) in December 1995.⁹

U.N. Security Council Resolution 1031 gave NATO the mandate to implement the military aspects of the Dayton Accord. IFOR was created to maintain the cessation of hostilities, separate the armed forces of the Federation and the Republika Srpska, transfer territory between the two entities, and move military forces and heavy weapons into approved sites.¹⁰ After the peaceful conduct of the September 1996 elections, IFOR’s mission was complete. However, Bosnia was not fully stable. In December 1996, NATO Foreign and Defence Ministers concluded that Bosnia needed a continued external military presence to consolidate the peace. In December 1996, NATO activated the Stabilization Force (SFOR) to implement the military aspects of the Dayton Accord as the legal successor to IFOR. Like IFOR, SFOR operates under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter (peace enforcement). According to NATO, its specific tasks are to: (1) deter or prevent a resumption of hostilities or new threats to peace; (2) promote a climate in

which the peace process can continue to move forward; and (3) provide selective support to civilian organizations within its capabilities.¹¹ Today SFOR retains slightly over 20,000 troops in Bosnia, including 3,900 Americans.¹²

The third phase of the Balkan conflict came in Kosovo. Serbs considered that region their cultural homeland, but its population had become predominantly ethnic Albanian by the 1990s. It was also one of the poorest regions of the Balkans, with ethnic Albanians at the bottom of the economic ladder. This intensified tensions. In late 1998, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic unleashed a police and military campaign against separatist insurgents in Kosovo. This provoked a military response from NATO which consisted primarily of aerial bombing and lasted from late March 1999 to mid-June 1999.¹³ During this time, many ethnic Albanians were either displaced from their homes in Kosovo or killed by Serbian troops or police.

After Milosevic buckled under pressure and withdrew his forces from Kosovo, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999 authorized the deployment of a NATO-led international force primarily to provide a secure environment (KFOR). KFOR operates in conjunction with a civilian interim U.N. administration which oversees economic and social reconstruction, conducts elections, monitors human rights, ensures the protection and right to return of refugees, and will eventually facilitate the process of deciding on Kosovo's future.¹⁴ The United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) provides the transitional administration while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions. According to General Wesley Clark, former Commander of the United States European Command and NATO, UNMIK started slowly but is making progress towards civil implementation and normalizing Kosovo.¹⁵ As of December 2000, there were 29 maneuver battalions in KFOR of which 3 are Russian. The nearly 44,000 troops include over 5,300 Americans (about 15 percent of the total). Italy provides over 6,300 troops; Germany and France

provide over 5,000. Additionally, 20 non-NATO nations contribute over 7,700.

To craft a strategy for the future security of the Balkans, it is important to understand why the region lapsed into violence in the first place. Scholars differ on this. For instance, Susan L. Woodward stresses the economic roots of the Balkan conflict. Changes in the global economic system that began in the 1970s and 1980s such as the skyrocketing interest rate on the U.S. dollar, the ensuing global economic recession, and the hardening division of Europe that grew from the economic integration of the European Community caused poorly planned attempts at economic reform, austerity, and high unemployment in Yugoslavia, thus upsetting a fragile balance and opening the way for the ethnicization of politics.¹⁶ Robert Kaplan, by contrast, blames ancient ethnic enmities and the intersection of three great cultures—Orthodox Christian, Muslim, and Western Christian.¹⁷ Another perspective lays the blame at the feet of leaders who deliberately stoked ethnic differences and turned them into violence as the old order collapsed. Warren Zimmermann, the last U.S. ambassador to a unified Yugoslavia, considers Slobodan Milosevic, former president of Serbia, and Franjo Tudjman, the late president of Croatia, as the most culpable, even though it was their cronies and subordinates who engineered the wars and massacres that swept the Balkans.¹⁸

All three perspectives are accurate to some extent: there were economic pressures, traditional ethnic mistrust, and evil leaders at play in the Balkans. But other factors were equally important. Because it has been subjugated by outside powers for so long, the Balkans has always had underdeveloped mechanisms for conflict resolution and consensus building. Through most of history, stability was something imposed on the people of the Balkans rather than built and maintained by them. Unfortunately, during the early stages of the Balkan conflicts when it might have been possible to control or deter the violence, no outside power assumed responsibility and Balkan leaders themselves

were not up to the task. The United States felt that security in the region was of prime concern to Western Europe and therefore “Europe”—whoever *that* is—should lead. Western Europe proved unable or unwilling to do this. By the time the United States and its NATO allies finally took concerted action, the thousands of burned houses and mass graves across the Balkans made conflict resolution much harder.

The residue of the Cold War added fuel to the fire. As a result of Tito’s “nation in arms” strategy, the Balkans were awash in weapons and men with military training. The long years of Tito’s dictatorship also brought a tradition of perception manipulation, relying heavily on electronic media. As a result, the Yugoslav people—like any who recently escaped the yoke of dictatorship—found it difficult to distinguish propaganda from truth. While Yugoslavia disintegrated, political leaders made use of this psychological vulnerability to inflame ethnic mistrust and bolster their own power bases. By the 1990s, the maturation of the international drug trade and other forms of transnational organized crime, in combination with the prosperity of the various Balkan émigré communities spread throughout Western Europe and North America, provided funding for the bevy of militias, armies, insurgent movements, and bands of thugs that blossomed in Southeast Europe. The Balkan conflict, then, is multicausal, multidimensional, and complex. Resolution will not come easily or quickly.

The Case for Engagement.

Although many Americans trace their ancestry to the Balkans, it is not a region of traditional political, economic, or military involvement for the United States. During the Cold War, Tito balanced East and West, avoiding formal membership in either bloc. U.S. policymakers found this acceptable since nonalignment, while it was less desirable than a pro-Western posture, at least was better than joining the Warsaw Pact. As a result, Washington cultivated a modest security relationship with Yugoslavia.¹⁹ But while

the Balkans saw only limited U.S. *involvement*, it was a region of more substantial U.S. *concern*, both during and after the Cold War. Strategic geography explains this: the Balkans are important to the United States because it is a conflict-ridden region near areas of more substantial U.S. interest, including traditional economic and political partners like Greece, Turkey, Germany, and Italy and, in the post-Cold War period, new partners like Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania. It matters to the United States because it matters to American allies.

While Washington would have preferred that someone else assume responsibility for stability in the Balkans during the 1990s, this was not to be. After several years of relative inaction as Yugoslavia broke up, the Clinton administration concluded that failing to address the Balkans would endanger European stability, damage NATO, and thus threaten important U.S. national interests.²⁰ According to the December 1999 U.S. National Security Strategy:

European stability is vital to our own security. The United States has two strategic goals in Europe. The first is to build a Europe that is truly integrated, democratic, prosperous and at peace—a realization of the vision the United States launched 50 years ago with the Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Our second goal is to work with our allies and partners across the Atlantic to meet the global challenges no nation can meet alone . . . NATO remains the anchor of American engagement in Europe and the linchpin of transatlantic security. As the leading guarantor of European security and a force for European stability, NATO must play a leading role in promoting a more integrated and secure Europe, prepared to respond to new challenges.²¹

Balkan instability threatens wider European security by generating refugees; challenging rule by law, respect for human rights, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts; and by having the potential to divide European states against one another, draw them into the conflict, or spark terrorism. As Secretary of State Madeleine Albright phrased it,

“History teaches us that America cannot be secure if Europe is not secure, and events have reminded us repeatedly that Europe cannot be secure when conflict engulfs the Balkans.”²² “The United States is engaged there,” add Ivo Daalder and Michael O’Hanlon of the Brookings Institution, “not because Europe is shirking its duty but because the stability and security of the region are of real U.S. interest.”²³

The United States also has symbolic and humanitarian interests at stake in the Balkans. Intervention there was intended to show the world that genocide and ethnic cleansing will be punished and its rewards reversed (at least some of the time). During the NATO air campaign against Serbia in 1999, President Clinton stated:

We and our 18 NATO allies are in Kosovo today because we want to stop the slaughter and the ethnic cleansing; because we want to build a stable, united, prosperous Europe that includes the Balkans and its neighbors; and because we don’t want the 21st century to be dominated by the dark marriage of modern weapons and ancient ethnic, racial and religious hatred. We cannot simply watch as hundreds of thousands of people are brutalized, murdered, raped, forced from their homes, their family histories erased—all in the name of ethnic pride and purity. . . . the stand we have taken, first in Bosnia, now in Kosovo, against organized ethnic hatred is a moral imperative.²⁴

U.S. strategy in the Balkans, then, is a subset of wider American national security strategy in Europe which seeks a mature partnership that can deal not only with defense in the traditional sense, but also with conflict prevention, crisis management, and common solutions to threats and crises beyond Europe.²⁵ U.S. objectives in the Balkans are: (1) maximizing the chances that the region will become stable, prosperous, and integrated into Europe; (2) sustaining NATO’s leading role in European security; and, (3) doing so in such a way that the U.S. military remains able to implement the National Military Strategy, in particular to fight and win two nearly simultaneous major theater wars.

According to Assistant Secretary of State Marc Grossman, "We want a U.S.-Europe partnership committed to the goals and values that matter: security, prosperity, and democracy."²⁶ The pillars of this partnership are NATO, the relationship between the United States and the European Union (EU) and its emerging common foreign and defense policy, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) which American policy-makers see as occupying the middle ground between diplomacy and force, thus helping to prevent conflict and champion human rights and rule of law.²⁷

U.S. policy toward the Balkans and Southeastern Europe seeks to cooperate with state and non-state partners like NATO and the EU to promote democratic, economic, and military reforms, thus integrating the region's new democracies into the European political and economic mainstream.²⁸ The Clinton administration concluded that the Balkans will only be stable and secure when the region is composed of democratic states with market-based economies integrated into the new European structures.²⁹

Today, stability and security in the Balkans are important to the United States not only because of the impact that instability there can have on all of Europe, but also because it has become a test of NATO's viability in the post-Cold War security environment. European diplomats, officials, and analysts have all suggested that any precipitous American withdrawal from the region would divide NATO, undermine Europe's efforts to increase its military capacity, and call NATO's strategic relevance into question.³⁰ European nations provide the vast majority of the peacekeeping forces deployed to the Balkans and the largest amount of foreign assistance.³¹ Even so, the U.S. military presence in Bosnia and Kosovo admittedly is costly both in money and in its broader effects on the Army (and, to a lesser extent, the other services). But this is a price worth paying for sustaining the influence and relevance of NATO, at least in terms of money. Certainly the United States must be selective in involving its military in protracted

peacekeeping and must sometimes resist the temptation to get involved. The United States should never have allowed peacekeeping in the Balkans to become the test of NATO's viability. But it did. That cannot be changed. In future conflicts and other places, it may be appropriate for the United States to let others lead. But right now, the Balkans is not the place to begin it. U.S. interests in Europe have not changed since American forces entered the Balkan conflict, thus the case for sustained engagement is a strong one.

Refining the Strategy of Engagement.

Should President Bush decide that current U.S. objectives in the Balkans are worth pursuing, American strategy will be defined by two issues: the *duration* of U.S. military engagement in the Balkans and the *form* this engagement should take.

There are three alternatives concerning the *duration* of U.S. military engagement: (1) the *quick hand over* of all security functions—whether purely military or constabulary—to others, whether European nations or Balkans forces themselves; (2) a *modulated hand over* of all security functions, or (3) a strategy that plans for *long-term* American involvement in the region. Each of these alternatives might attain U.S. objectives but entails advantages, costs, and risks. A quick hand over would minimize the amount of turbulence, stress, and distraction from warfighting faced by the Army due to its Balkan commitments. In the short term, however, it might require increased effort if the Army were to complete the vital tasks necessary for stability before withdrawing or handing over responsibilities. This option also risks being seen as an abdication of U.S. leadership and thus diminishing Washington's ability to influence events not only in the Balkans, but in Europe as a whole. It might also increase the chances that the Balkans remain a festering problem and a drain on international resources for an extended period of time. If violence exploded again, the United States

might be forced to return to the region in force. Just as removing a cast from a broken limb too early can result in greater damage than the initial injury, so too might withdrawal from the Balkans before establishing self-sustaining security. In the final reckoning, unless one believes that the European states are deliberately shirking responsibility for the security of their continent and need some sort of shock treatment to change their tack, the quick hand over is a high-risk approach.

A strategy based on a modulated hand over of functions would include a significant U.S. military presence in Bosnia and Kosovo for at least 5 years with gradual decreases over 10-20 years. The assumption underlying this option is that American dominance of European security is unnatural or undesirable but that the shift to a co-equal partnership must take place slowly, allowing European security structures to mature gradually. This option would lower the risk accompanying a shift from American dominance to co-equal partnership (or even a secondary, supporting role for the United States) by modulating the pace of change, but still makes clear that such change must happen. Eventually, this would diminish the burden on the U.S. military and allow it to focus on other regions of the world less able to manage their own security. This option probably would spark a decline in the influence and role of NATO. In other words, the United States cannot simultaneously continue to dominate NATO, continue to insist that NATO is the preeminent European security organization, and diminish its leadership in one of Europe's most pressing security problems. Because of decisions made during the past decade, leadership in the Balkans is part of the fee the United States must pay for influence in Europe. In addition, if the handover of functions takes place too quickly, instability or even conflict could reemerge in the Balkans if the organizations and states to which the burden is shifted prove incapable of protecting regional security.

The final alternative is to sustain the leading role of the United States until American and NATO objectives in the

Balkans are met. This would entail long-term involvement but would also provide the United States the greatest degree of control over regional outcomes and have the greatest chance of leading to ultimate success. But it is also the most costly in terms of money and the burden on the U.S. Army. It might lead to increased turbulence within the Army, with concomitant problems of recruitment and retention. And it could degrade the Army's proficiency at other missions such as fighting major wars. If the security situation in the Balkans deteriorates, NATO and U.N. forces, including American ones, could be the targets of terrorism, either in the region or outside of it. And, long-term U.S. involvement could limit the incentives for the maturation of other elements of the European security system and the modernization of European militaries.

There are four potential *forms* of U.S. military activity in the Balkans:

- Provision of a ready reserve or rapid reaction force for deterrence and to be used if violence reemerges and escalates beyond the point where local security forces or external peacekeepers can control it. Such a ready reserve could be stationed in the Balkans or nearby. To be most effective, it should be a joint force, but with rapidly deployable landpower.
- Provision of day-to-day, local security, including functions such as local patrolling, manning of road blocks, observation, and monitoring.
- Nation assistance, including mine clearing, infrastructure reconstruction and, potentially, involvement in civil functions such as policing and elections.
- Military-to-military activities designed to help with the development and professionalization of local security forces. This could include provision of professional military education using the International Military Education and Training (IMET)

and Extended International Military Education and Training (EIMET) programs, security assistance, mobile training teams (MTTs), and combined exercises.

Of these functions, the provision of day-to-day, local security is the most draining on the Army both because it requires a fairly large number of forces and because it takes the units involved away from training for warfighting. Units providing a ready reserve or rapid reaction force would spend most of their time training for warfighting type missions, and thus would find this duty less of a distraction. Troops involved in nation assistance would most often be engineers and civil affairs specialists. Their activities in the Balkans would be closely related to their normal functions, and thus not a substantial distraction. Military-to-military activities would involve few U.S. forces except during major exercises. Much of the training could be done by contractors, thus lessening the demands on the military. Exercises would not be a major distraction since they would be similar to the type of training the American unit might undergo on a regular basis.

Combining the two dimensions—the *duration* of American engagement and the *form* of American engagement—leads to a substantial array of strategic alternatives. While it might make sense to hand over all four military functions at the same pace, more than likely the best approach will be to transfer functions at a different pace. In the most general sense, the United States should seek to hand over nation assistance and day-to-day local security functions in a short period of time, perhaps 2 years. Military-to-military functions and the provision of a rapid reaction force or ready reserve should continue. Both would be facilitated by a modest long-term presence in the Balkans to include bases, most optimally in Bosnia (but possibly in Croatia or Macedonia). As Richard Hoffman and Thomas Young contend, today the presence of the U.S. Army is most needed in the Balkans, not Germany.³² Redeployment of some forces to the region would exercise U.S. leadership in

the most unstable part of Europe and, according to Hoffman and Young, prove less expensive in the long term since countries in or around the Balkans would probably provide garrison and training facilities at little or no cost. Moving at least a division to Hungary, where the U.S. Army already has an important logistics presence, thus seems logical.

Even though the United States provides the largest single component of the multinational forces in the Balkans, it makes sense to have both SFOR and KFOR under European command, particularly if the situation remains relatively benign. To date, Americans have commanded SFOR and Europeans have commanded KFOR.³³ The ultimate goal is for the United States to refine its leadership role in Europe so that its primary function is providing support to European states in the Balkans. Exercise of command by generals from America's NATO allies is one way to show this. Along similar lines, EUCOM should further focus attention on southeast Europe and consider creating a subunified command for southeast Europe.

At a somewhat lower level, the Army could potentially use short-, medium-, or long-term rotations during its operations in the Balkans whatever the form and duration of its engagement. Short-term rotations would be unaccompanied temporary duty (TDY) assignments of 6 months or less, with forces returning to their home station following the assignment. Medium-term rotations would involve 12 month unaccompanied tours. Long-term rotations would be 2-3 year accompanied tours involving a permanent change of station (PCS). Unaccompanied 18 month tours could be offered and promoted according to the specific job and location. Short-term rotations would allow the maximum use of the Reserve Component in the Balkan force, since it is difficult for members of either the National Guard or Army Reserve to deploy for longer than 6 months. Both short-term and medium-term deployments would minimize the need for support facilities in the Balkans, since no families would accompany deploying soldiers. Facilities could be more austere since individuals or units

would use them for a limited period of time. On the down side, both short-term and mid-term deployments make it difficult for an individual or a unit to develop extensive expertise on the region in which they are deployed. This might be acceptable if a unit serves purely as a strategic ready reserve or rapid reaction force for emergencies, but is a major hindrance for those involved in day-to-day local stability operations or other forms of engagement. Short-term or medium-term rotation cycles might work best if combined with a program of individual rather than unit replacements. That way a given unit would have at least some members with a few months of local experience at any given time rather than all being new at the same time. On the other hand, an individual replacement policy can challenge unit effectiveness, team-building, the rotation base, and the personnel system.

A program of long-term rotation makes more sense if U.S. strategy calls for extended engagement in the Balkans. While initially more costly since infrastructure—including family support infrastructure—would have to be built, it ultimately might reduce turbulence since units and individuals stationed in the Balkans would not be separated from their families. Additionally, it would reinforce the perception of normalcy in the region. Long-term rotations make the most sense both if U.S. strategy is based on extended engagement and the Balkan states continue movement toward stability and reform. If the level of tension and the potential for conflict remain high, or if U.S. strategy treats engagement in the Balkans as temporary, then the most logical solution might be the deployment of support and rapid reaction units for longer tours to Hungary or another location near to (but not in) the Balkans, a mix of short-term and medium-term deployments into the Balkans, and, perhaps, 1-year or even 2-year deployments for headquarters personnel.

The Balkans operations have represented one of the success stories of Active and Reserve integration for the Army. The deployment of a large contingent of the 49th

Armored Division of the Texas Army National Guard in March 2000 represented the largest activation of the National Guard since the Korean War, and was one of the few times in Army history when a Guard unit commanded active duty forces.³⁴ Beginning in June 2001, Army National Guard divisions will command six of the next nine SFOR rotations. Troops for the National Guard-led rotations will come largely from the Active Component, and vice versa.

The reserve components have been central to all Army peace operations, in large part because a high proportion of the type of combat support and combat service support units that are needed for these activities are in the reserves. The Army accesses reservists either by seeking volunteers or by an involuntary call-up using the Presidential Selected Reserve Call-up (PSRC). Volunteers have played a major role in all Army operations since the end of the Cold War, but pose problems because there is no assurance that enough reservists with the requisite skills will volunteer. This can create shortfalls and delays as units must be molded from individual volunteers.³⁵ Excessive use of volunteers strips units of essential personnel, creating shortages that must be remedied should the units be activated. PSRC avoids this problem, but can cause other ones since frequent or extended call-ups disrupt the civilian careers of reservists and hurt retention and recruitment. In addition, PSRC can only be used once in a given operation.

Clearly the Army forces deployed to the Balkans must be a mix of active and reserve components. If positive trends in Bosnia and Kosovo continue and the U.S. military missions become predominantly stability and support, the role played by the reserve components can increase. It will probably make sense to keep a rapid reaction force with a strong aviation component in the Balkans or very nearby. If U.S. leaders decide to move toward permanent stationing of forces in the Balkans, those individuals filling long-tour slots would most often be active component, while those in short-tour slots could be heavily reserve component (although this has the potential to create morale problems if

the impression arises that reserve component units are not “pulling their load”). Ultimately, though, the Army may want to increase the number of “high demand, low density” support units in the active component so as to avoid logjams for future peace operations.

Determinants of American Strategy.

The most appropriate Balkans strategy for the United States will be determined by an array of independent variables. Army leaders and planners must monitor these, making adjustments to the strategy as required. They should also advise U.S. political leaders on the preferred policy and course of events.

One of the most important determinants of future role of the Army in the Balkans will be the national security strategy of the new administration, as shaped by the ongoing Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). The preferred outcome would be a QDR that both notes the importance of peace operations to U.S. national security but also states that optimal performance in such operations requires a modest increase in force structure. The future U.S. defense budget and force size will also affect the role of the Army in the Balkans. Nearly every analyst of American defense strategy admits that there is a mismatch between national-level strategic objectives and the force end strength.³⁶ In simple terms, the high operational tempo of recent years, including involvement in the Balkans, has forced the military to postpone many procurement programs and, increasingly, to stretch out maintenance and replacement activities. At the same time, the Army has begun a major transformation to become more strategically responsive and dominant across the spectrum. This too will entail substantial costs.³⁷ While President Bush will seek an increase in the defense budget, the gains may not be enough. This could force Army leaders to request a diminution of the U.S. involvement in the Balkans in order

to preserve funding for procurement and maintenance, and to mitigate the impact on personnel.

Support for Balkan engagement from the American public and its elected leaders is an independent variable. Existing support is adequate, but fragile. At the time that President Clinton committed U.S. forces to Bosnia in 1995, 55 percent of the respondents in a Time/CNN poll disapproved.³⁸ During the air campaign against Serbia in 1999, less than 50 percent of those polled considered vital U.S. interests at stake.³⁹ In May 2000, the Senate narrowly defeated a bill co-sponsored by Senate Armed Services Committee chairman John W. Warner (R-Va) that would have pulled U.S. troops out of Kosovo by July 2001.⁴⁰ The next Congress—which will be evenly divided between the parties and thus heavily constrained—is likely to remain lukewarm in its support for involvement in the Balkans. While the American people may not be seized with the urge to abandon the Balkans immediately, support for extensive U.S. involvement could easily crumble in the face of something like attacks on U.S. forces in the region which result in casualties or—less likely—a repeat of the force discipline problems that the United States has experienced in Kosovo.⁴¹

The evolution of the European security architecture will also be an important determinant of U.S. strategy. Most analysts agree that no European security organization other than NATO will be in a position for many years to either assume control of Balkan activities or to take full responsibility for other security threats of equal magnitude. U.S. national interests will be best served if NATO retains the leading role in the Balkans. That said, the European states are building new security organizations that will—depending on one's perspective—complement NATO or provide an alternative to it. The Kosovo crisis, which left European leaders very frustrated at their lack of military capability when compared to the United States, stimulated efforts to provide the European Union with the military means to back up its diplomatic efforts, thus leading to the

development of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) at the EU's December 1999 Helsinki summit and agreed-on force structure goals.⁴² According to Ambassador Jürgen Chrobog, Germany's representative to the United States, "With ESDP, the European Union has committed itself to making essential progress towards a political union which is underpinned by credible political and military action."⁴³ ESDP is intended to give Europeans a formal mechanism for crisis management; develop European capabilities in key military areas and augment transatlantic burden-sharing; and allow the EU to better integrate non-NATO countries into the European security system.⁴⁴

In November 2000 the EU began to give teeth to this idea by pledging troops and equipment to create a 60,000 member rapid reaction force by 2003.⁴⁵ Most European leaders stress that ESDP and NATO are parallel and compatible rather than competing organizations.⁴⁶ Other experts, though, consider ESDP a potential threat to NATO's solidarity and preeminence in European security.⁴⁷ According to a Dutch editorial, "The more details are divulged about Europe's plans, the clearer it becomes that it is no longer intent on complementing NATO, but rather replacing it."⁴⁸ John Major, former British Prime Minister, stated that the EU military force, "adds not one iota of additional capacity. It offers no secure chain of command and, in my judgment, it will undermine NATO."⁴⁹

How quickly and how far the evolution of the European security architecture will develop remains to be seen but if this takes off and diverges from NATO, American policymakers undoubtedly will reconsider the extent and form of U.S. engagement in the Balkans. The goal for the United States should be to assure that ESDP develops in a complementary fashion, while NATO's leading role is sustained.

Similarly, decisions made at the 2002 NATO summit concerning enlargement will affect U.S. strategy in the

Balkans. If some or all of the states in southeastern Europe who seek membership, including the Balkan states, are rejected, then any sort of comprehensive regional strategy based on offering carrots to nations and groups that support greater security and sticks to those who do not might become difficult to implement. On the other hand, if some or all of the Balkan states are admitted to NATO, then the case for long-term U.S. engagement and a permanent presence becomes much stronger.

The post-Milosevic political, economic, and social transition of Serbia will also help shape American strategy. While Vojislav Kostunica announced in November 2000 that he was prepared to restore diplomatic ties with the United States, Germany, France, and Britain, he is likely to keep the United States at arm's length because of bitterness among the Serbian people over the 1999 air campaign, the occupation of Kosovo, and the economic sanctions imposed on their country.⁵⁰ Through November of 2000, Kostunica refused to meet with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.⁵¹ Belgrade's mistrust of the United States may leave European states better positioned to work with Kostunica than Washington.

Kostunica's policy toward Kosovo will be a vital determinant of the future stability of the Balkans and of the American role in the region. While the Serbian leader has indicated that independence for Kosovo is not inconceivable, he also said that the issue could prove to be as intractable as the Israeli-Palestinian contest over Jerusalem.⁵² At this time, Kostunica seems willing to open talks with Kosovar Albanian leaders, but they have not been receptive. Serbia's policy toward Montenegro will be equally important. Montenegro continues to attempt to change its relationship with Serbia, seeking a loose confederation where each state controls the troops on its soil while coordinating foreign and economic policy.⁵³ While Kostunica has backed off from Milosevic's threat of military action against Montenegro, he has not accepted the confederation plan, so the future relationship between the

two remains uncertain.⁵⁴ The United States has sought to restrain Milo Djukanovic, Montenegro's pro-independence president, by threatening to cut off aid, but this has had little effect.⁵⁵ In November 2000, for instance, Djukanovic appealed to other European leaders to back independence.⁵⁶ Other issues like Serbia's relationship with Macedonia and Croatia, its policy toward the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina, and its ability to attract capital and integrate into the European economy will also affect American strategy in the Balkans. The process of economic reconstruction may prove even more difficult than resolution of political and territorial issues. The 1999 NATO air campaign and years of sanctions degraded Serbia's infrastructure which will put it at a severe disadvantage when competing with other Balkan and Eastern European states for investment capital. And, under Milosevic, corruption became ingrained.⁵⁷ This will take many years to root out and will also deter investors. Still, given Serbia's central role in the Balkans, the United States seeks a stable, democratic, prosperous state with a working relationship with Washington.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the ability of political leaders to transcend the hatred and violence of the past decade and make the awkward ethnic power-sharing arrangement of the Dayton Accord work (or to renegotiate it) will play a major role in shaping future U.S. strategy.⁵⁸ While the shooting has stopped there, mistrust and enmity remain, leading to a "bitter peace."⁵⁹ "Bosnia has come a long way," write the editors of the *Christian Science Monitor*, "but its rebuilt cities mask simmering nationalist policies and deep-set habits of graft and corruption."⁶⁰ Vojislav Kostunica's groundbreaking October 2000 visit raised hopes of a diplomatic breakthrough between Bosnia and Serbia.⁶¹ This would go a long way in moving Bosnian Serbs toward reconciliation with the other segments of their nation's society. Armed forces from the various factions are beginning to work together and have agreed on some reductions in the size of their forces.⁶² There is progress on

refugee returns.⁶³ There also are signs of increasing ethnic tolerance.⁶⁴

But all is not rosy in Bosnia. The November 2000 elections failed to grant a clear mandate to any pro-Western, multi-ethnic political party, suggesting that most Bosnians have not transcended a strongly ethnic approach to politics.⁶⁵ Small groups of armed thugs organized and controlled by extremist leaders still operate in the country.⁶⁶ The ability of Bosnians to build a functioning legal and criminal justice system and to attract investment and integrate into the European economy also will be vital. So far, Bosnia has made only limited progress on the economic front. As Benn Steil and Susan L. Woodward write, "after \$4.5 billion of multilateral commitments in 1996-1998 and a massive inflow of bilateral aid, the Bosnian economy is scarcely more viable than it was when the Dayton Accord was signed in 1995."⁶⁷

There is a vicious circle: to build a viable multiethnic society, refugees need to return home, but for this to happen jobs must be created and ethnic barriers removed. For jobs to be created, the culture of corruption, communism, and control must be altered. So far this has not happened. Bosnia still depends on the flow of foreign aid which is already declining and, according to a recent report by the General Accounting Office, pervasive corruption is stifling economic growth.⁶⁸ Many large aid donors, including the United States, the World Bank and the United Nations, plan to cut their assistance to Bosnia in 2001.⁶⁹ Many of the refugees, particularly those in Germany, see little economic incentive to return. In addition, the fact that many indicted war criminals remain at large and retain influence, particularly in the Republika Srpska, is troubling.⁷⁰

The ability of Kosovo to overcome endemic corruption, stifle crime, and build a legal system and functioning economy also will affect U.S. strategy in the Balkans.⁷¹ Despite a significant drop during the latter half of 2000, crime, according to the commander of the United States

contingent of KFOR, remains a major problem.⁷² From a larger perspective, the ability of Kosovar Albanians either to accept affiliation with Serbia that includes some sort of autonomy, or negotiate separation with Belgrade will, in part, determine U.S. policy. Today, the ethnically Albanian population in Kosovo considers itself on the road to independence. Leaders like Ibrahim Rugova have stated "Independence is very much the goal," and there are worries that the disbanded Kosovo Liberation Army will be reconstituted and renew its armed struggle against Serb forces—perhaps even against NATO peacekeepers—if the movement toward independence is thwarted.⁷³ In November 2000, for instance, Kosovar Albanian rebels launched a series of attacks in the border region between Kosovo and Serbia proper which left four Serbian policemen dead.⁷⁴ In response, Serbia threatened to return troops to the buffer zone between Kosovo and Serbia proper unless KFOR halted the attacks.⁷⁵

The November 2000 violence in Kosovo indicates larger problems. Violence persists throughout the region. Serbia's transitional government, in fact, claims that since the arrival of KFOR, Albanian terrorists have carried out 5,259 attacks which have killed 1,055 people.⁷⁶ While this precise figure may be questioned, the sporadic outbreak of violence is serious. The continuing pressure for independence puts the United States and its NATO allies in an extremely difficult position. As Michael Mandelbaum notes, NATO "intervened in a civil war and defeated one side, but embraced the position of the party it had defeated on the issue over which the war had been fought."⁷⁷ Most observers contend that the fall of Milosevic has hurt the desire of Kosovar Albanians for independence. As Steven Erlander of the *New York Times* writes, "Independence is likely to become not just a dream deferred, but a dream denied."⁷⁸

From the perspective of the United States and the other European states, independence for Kosovo could be a destabilizing factor throughout the region, certainly affecting Macedonia with its substantial Albanian minority

and possibly adding fuel for calls for a “greater Albania” no matter how unlikely that may appear at the present.⁷⁹ Unlike Bosnia where there was a functioning, low-level civil society to serve as a foundation for the post-war period, nothing like this exists in Kosovo. There the only sources of legal and political authority were the Serbian government and the informal regulatory system based on clans.⁸⁰ In an independent Kosovo, the former would be removed and the latter cannot be the building block of a modern democratic state.

Despite reports that the United States is willing to break with its NATO allies and accept Kosovo independence, official U.S. policy is that Kosovo should gain republic status within Yugoslavia, making it the co-equal of Montenegro and Serbia.⁸¹ But it is not clear whether the Kosovar Albanians, most of whom suffered personal loss at the hands of the Serbian military and militias, will accept this. If reforms in Serbia move forward, the United States could find itself protecting a Kosovo controlled by militias and criminal organizations against a democratic Serbia whose claim to sovereignty over Kosovo is recognized by most of the international community, including Washington. Within a few years, NATO forces could go from being seen as liberators to foreign occupiers by Kosovar Albanians. In either case, the longer that ultimate resolution of the independence issue is postponed, the less likely it will be violent.

The success or failure of reforms elsewhere in the Balkans will also affect the extent and length of American engagement. Slovenia has made substantial economic and political progress, and is moving steadily toward the sort of integration into Europe for all Balkan states that the United States seeks. Ljubljana’s failure to be invited in the first round of NATO enlargement disappointed Slovenian leaders and caused a number of political changes that led to the creation of a strategy aimed at membership in NATO and the European Union.⁸² Igor Bavcar, deputy president of the dominant Liberal Democrat Party, stated, “we plan to

complete negotiation for EU membership by the end of next year [2001] and to privatize some major economic sectors by then, reform public administration, and undertake agricultural reform.”⁸³

These efforts clearly support the ultimate U.S. objective of an integrated, prosperous, stable Europe, and should be encouraged. The U.S. military, particularly the Army, should continue to work closely with its Slovenian counterparts to help them prepare for NATO membership.

Croatia's war of separation from Yugoslavia was longer and more costly than that of Slovenia, its involvement in the Bosnia conflict was deeper, and the authoritarian and corrupt Tudjman resisted reform. As a result, Croatia has further to go than Slovenia to successfully integrate into Europe. There has been progress though. Since Tudjman's death in December 1999, a reformist regime has nearly abandoned support for hard-line ethnic Croats in Bosnia, which was one of the obstacles to better relations with the West.⁸⁴ Croatia is developing close relationships with NATO. The government led by Ivica Racan is seeking membership in both NATO and the EU.⁸⁵ NATO countries are actively involved in helping the Croatian military adjust to democratic rule and civilian control.⁸⁶ And in May 2000, Croatia became the 26th state to join the Partnership for Peace. At the ceremony welcoming the new member, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright stated, “In a few short months, Croatia has made dramatic progress toward a democratic society, has demonstrated a renewed commitment to the Dayton process, and has taken steps to promote stability and security in Southeastern Europe...Today's ceremony recognizes the remarkable gains Croatia has made toward integration into the Euro-Atlantic community.”⁸⁷ Still, Croatia's reform is a work-in-progress. Much remains to be done in terms of rooting out authoritarian tendencies and making the country hospitable to the Serb minority in the Krajina.

In Macedonia, deployment of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in 1993 staved off impending disaster but that small country still faces substantial problems, particularly concerning Kosovo refugees and border disagreements with Serbia and Albania.⁸⁸ More ominously, tensions between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians in Macedonia could spark armed conflict.⁸⁹ Such an event might disillusion the American public on the prospects for stability in the Balkans and intensify demands for disengagement. A similar pattern holds in Albania. Tirana has been a close partner of the United States as Yugoslavia fell apart and the Balkans conflicts broke out. The U.S. military has undertaken a number of modest but important engagement activities in Albania, including programs to help professionalize the military.⁹⁰ Still, as the 1997 violence in Albania sparked by the collapse of the economy showed, instability in that country—which is probably the least developed and poorest in Europe—always looms.⁹¹ In general, the more that the Balkans stay on the track of reform and eventual integration into European economic, political and perhaps military structures, the better the chances that the United States will remain engaged in Bosnia, Kosovo, and elsewhere in the region.

Finally, the status of the global security system will affect U.S. strategy in the Balkans. The more peaceful the global security system, the more likely the United States is to undertake sustained and extensive engagement in the Balkans. Should some other part of the world heat up—whether the Middle East, the arc of crisis in the Northern Andean region, the Pacific Rim, or somewhere else—American policymakers and military leaders might consider the Balkans to be an unacceptable distraction, and thus shift toward lower levels of engagement or withdrawal.

The Army and Strategic Withdrawal.

U.S. objectives in the Balkans are to maximize the chances that the region will become stable, prosperous, and integrated into Europe, doing so in a way that sustains NATO's leading role in European security and does not entail unbearable costs or unacceptable risk to American security in other parts of the world. Withdrawal would only make sense if one of three conditions held: (1) the current level of involvement is creating unacceptable risk elsewhere in the world; (2) U.S. objectives are unlikely to be met at a reasonable cost, so the nation wants to "cut its losses"; (3) the European nations are not bearing their fair share of stabilizing and rebuilding the Balkans, and thus need a "kick in the pants." There is little evidence to support any of these three ideas, so withdrawal would ultimately represent a strategic failure. Even so, congressional and public support for involvement is weak enough that the Army should begin thinking about the methods and implications of withdrawal. If political leaders do opt for this against advice, the goal should be damage limitation—finding a method of disengagement that does the least harm to European stability and U.S. leadership in Europe. This could take three forms.

The "1995" Alternative. The least radical form of disengagement would pull the American military out of the conflictive parts of Balkans but seek to preserve the status quo elsewhere in Europe. It would, in other words, attempt to return to the situation that held in Europe in 1995. American political leaders would probably use the Army to contain the Balkan conflict by strengthening the states that border on the region, particularly Hungary, Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania. Potentially, the Balkans themselves could be divided for the purposes of strategy, with the United States strengthening the non-conflictive states of Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia while avoiding engagement in the conflict zone of Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, and Montenegro. In either case, the Army could expect

greater military-to-military engagement with armies of these states. This might require an augmentation of Army forces in Europe, or at least an intra-theater redeployment of some forces from Germany to southeastern Europe. Unless this is done by redeploying Army units from Germany to southeastern Europe, it would not have the desired effect of diminishing turbulence and stress.

The "1988" Alternative. The second form of disengagement would pull U.S. units from the Balkans and return them to bases in Germany and elsewhere while making it clear that the military serves as a deterrent and, if necessary, a warfighting force, but will not be used in protracted peace operations or large scale shaping activities. This would require little adjustment on the part of the Army since it would represent a return to a Cold War posture, but is very unlikely to be politically sustainable. This alternative would disengage the U.S. Army from the type of problem most likely to threaten European security today so European states might request American withdrawal from their region.

The "1940" Alternative. The third form of disengagement would remove most U.S. forces from Europe, leaving the states of the region full responsibility for security. The withdrawal itself would be relatively easy for the Army since it would simply be a matter of closing European facilities and building more facilities in the United States to base the units that were withdrawn. From a strategic perspective, though, withdrawal from Europe would mean that the Army would have to deploy over greater distances should it ever be used in Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East. It would also diminish the chances that European states would serve as coalition partners for future operations outside Europe. Thus the Army would have to build and acquire methods for longer range deployment and sustainment, and plan for more unilateral operations rather than coalition ones. These would both be extremely difficult steps. In all likelihood, if the U.S. Army were

withdrawn from Europe, the strategic utility and hence the size of the Army would decrease.

Strategic Lessons from the Balkans.

The Army's involvement in the Balkans has generated questions with significance beyond that particular region. The Army must decide how to best prepare for peace operations while maintaining its warfighting competency. Specifically, Army participation in protracted peace operations raises a number of questions:

- Is the Army appropriately structured to undertake protracted peace operations while retaining its warfighting competency and has it developed the best possible personnel policies?
- Does the shortage of certain types of units in the active force hinder Army effectiveness in peace operations?
- If so, should the Army increase the number of these units in the force structure?
- Is the existing distribution of capabilities among the active and reserve components appropriate for peace operations?
- Will participation in protracted peace operations detract from the Army's ability to contribute to the Joint Team's ability to fight and win wars?⁹²

Based on the Balkans and other operations like Somalia, American leaders and strategists know or can assume a number of things. First, while the political cost of *rejecting* involvement in protracted peace operations eventually may be greater than the cost of involvement, peace operations are invariably expensive in money, people, and strategic risk. There are debates over the quantitative resources required by an extended peace operation. Using existing

personnel policies, many experts believe there is a 3 to 1 ratio, meaning that for every unit deployed, one must be recovering and one preparing to deploy. Some believe the true figure may be closer to 5 to 1 while a few believe the ratio to be less than 3 to 1. In any case, that peace operations have ripple effects and cause turbulence throughout the military is beyond dispute. In addition to causing turbulence, protracted peace operations entail substantial financial costs. Analysts estimate that U.S. operations in Kosovo cost about \$2-3.5 billion a year, and in Bosnia \$1.8 billion per year.⁹³

Second, American leaders can assume that undertaking a peace support mission and doing it badly or failing will entail greater political and strategic costs than not doing it at all. The nation should not accept a peace support mission unless it is willing to devote enough resources over a long enough period of time to attain success. This point is common sense and almost seems trite, but the United States is notorious for initially underestimating the investment required and then losing patience with military involvement in noncritical regions. There are signs of that in the Balkans already. To eschew involvement might erode America's reputation but, in most cases, this damage can be repaired. To accept engagement and then pull out could be politically disastrous.

Third, American leaders and strategists know that military force is vital for success in protracted peace operations, particularly in the early stages, but is not the sole determinant. The ultimate solutions most often feature economic, political, legal, cultural, and social components. The military can establish the conditions under which civilian organizations—whether state ones or non-state organizations and businesses—can generate decisive success. In the Balkans, for instance, the ultimate key to success is the Stability Pact, a comprehensive, coordinated, and strategic approach to the region initiated by the European Union in 1999 which seeks to create vibrant market economies and foster regional cooperation by

developing infrastructure, promoting private sector development, and encouraging democratization, reconciliation, and security.⁹⁴ Ultimately militaries can lose a peace operation if they do not establish security and stability, but cannot win one on their own.

Given these assumptions, it makes sense to think of the U.S. military's role in protracted peace operations in terms of three phases. No peace support operation reaches ultimate success without all three.

Phase I: Prepare. This stage is primarily political. It entails using the interagency process to formulate a strategy; developing and refining the intelligence picture of the conflict; undertaking diplomatic activities like coalition building and establishing a basis of legitimacy for multinational intervention, often under the authority of the United Nations; and, under some conditions, taking steps to isolate, pressure, and deter the forces of instability using political, psychological, economic or military means. The role of the U.S. military in Phase I is to: (1) provide advice to assist with strategy formulation; (2) contribute to the development and refinement of the intelligence picture of the conflict; (3) plan for combined operations once a coalition is formed; (4) demonstrate the ability of the United States to intervene militarily; and, (5) if appropriate, use standoff strikes and other means of force to pressure or isolate the forces of instability. The U.S. military's contribution during Phase I, then, is primarily supporting and indirect.

Phase II: Establish Security. Phase II is the most intensely military part of a protracted peace operation. The primary objective is to establish security, stopping as much violence as possible. The role of the U.S. military is to: (1) undertake operational planning, in combination with partners if the operation is a coalition one; (2) establish the logistical infrastructure for deployment; (3) prepare for and undertake the initial deployment (of decisive force in a peace enforcement or peace making situation; of monitors and other lightly armed forces in a benign peacekeeping

situation); (4) use military force to establish security; (5) assist civilian organizations and authorities with tasks like refugee support, establishment of basic civil authority, and, infrastructure construction or reconstruction; (6) continue refinement of the intelligence picture; and (7) if appropriate, continue using standoff strikes and other means to pressure or isolate the forces of instability.

Phase III: Build Sustainable Stability. Phases I and II may take days, weeks, or months. Phase III is likely to take years, but without it, no peace support operation stands much chance of success. During Phase III, the relative importance of civilian organizations including state agencies, nongovernmental organizations, international organizations, and commercial entities steadily increases in comparison to the military. At some point in Phase III, local security forces should have assumed responsibility for most activities, leaving international forces, including the U.S. military, as a strategic reserve or rapid reaction force. Throughout Phase III, the role of the U.S. military might be to provide all or part of the strategic reserve or rapid reaction force, and undertake military-to-military activities to help local armed forces improve their effectiveness and professionalism. Early in Phase III, the U.S. military might also provide support to civilian organizations via reconstruction of infrastructure, civil affairs, logistics, and similar activities.

In all three phases of a protracted peace operation, the Army's most important contribution will be the provision of security and deterrence in hostile environments. But this will not be its only contribution. Given this, the Army must continue to refine the way it is organized for peace support, seeking to optimize effectiveness and efficiency at this type of activity without eroding warfighting capabilities. In a broad sense, the Army and the Department of Defense in general have two alternatives:

Alternative I: Use Existing Forces for Peace Operations as Needed. If American political leaders decide that peace

operations will remain an important function of the U.S. military but one that is secondary to warfighting, the Army should improve its capabilities by: (1) increasing the peacekeeping training received by all units; (2) revising its notion of what constitutes 100 percent strength for a division in order minimize the turbulence and personnel problems caused by peace operations; (3) increasing the types of existing units important to peace operations that divisions have, particularly combat support and combat service support ones; (4) continuing the transformation process to make all Army units more versatile. In the short term, an increase in Army force size, particularly in what are known as “high demand, low density” units like Psychological Operations, Civil Affairs, Engineers, and Military Police, would greatly improve the ability of the Army to simultaneously fulfill its responsibilities in the Balkans and sustain its ability to implement the other dimensions of the National Military Strategy.

The Army’s practice since the end of the Cold War has been to use existing forces for peace operations, retraining them as necessary. Rather than having a standardized training program that all units follow, commanders should build training programs around their mission essential task list (METL). Since unit commanders should construct unit METLs, the amount of peace operations training varies with the commander.⁹⁵ Most often, units do not undergo any peacekeeping training unless they are slated for deployment to a peacekeeping operation. For instance, peacekeeping training for U.S. troops deployed to Kosovo has varied from a few days to more than two months.⁹⁶ This practice has generally worked well: the vast majority of Army units deployed for peace support operations have performed at a very high level. In December 2000 General Eric Shinseki named the units to see service in Bosnia and Kosovo through May 2005. This was intended, in part, to provide adequate time for specialized training.⁹⁷ But training is a zero sum game: if peace support training is increased, something else has to be decreased. This could

mean that greater proficiency at peace operations comes at the expense of warfighting proficiency. Ultimately the use of existing forces for peace operations, with or without increased training, makes sense only if peace operations remain a secondary strategic function. It is not the best alternative if national political leaders revise American strategy so that peace operations are a primary military function.

Alternative II: Create New Organizations. Should national policymakers alter U.S. strategy and make participation in protracted peace operations a major strategic function, the Department of Defense should form dedicated, joint, interagency peacekeeping organizations as an augmentation to existing force structure. This program could be under Army leadership, but the new organizations would probably look substantially different than traditional Army units. The most logical approach would be to form a standing interagency task force which includes a significant Army contribution, but also includes specialists in: infrastructure reconstruction; the building of political, administrative, criminal justice, and legal systems; refugee issues; public health; conflict resolution; disarmament; and intelligence. The Peace Support Interagency Task Force would form a cadre with other organizations and military units added to it as necessary. During the initial phase of a peace enforcement operation, significant ground combat forces might be attached. The Peace Support Interagency Task Force might also be multinational. At a minimum, it would be trained in multinational cooperation. As a peace support operation matures, the Army's contribution would be: (1) providing a small number of experts to the Interagency Task Force; (2) shaping and engagement activities with local security forces, including security assistance, training, professional military education, and combined exercises; and (3) provision of limited nation assistance, particularly mine clearing, and a rapid reaction force to serve as a deterrent and to respond to emergencies. The rapid reaction force could be stationed in-country or

elsewhere in a theater or region, depending on circumstances. From a strategic perspective, this Peace Support Interagency Task Force would serve as a bridge between the time when much of the effort is borne by military forces from outside and Phase III, where local forces and organizations are in the forefront.

In this alternative, U.S. Army warfighting units would not have to train for the non-combat component of peace support operations, thus leaving them to focus on warfighting skills. This alternative would optimize the U.S. military's effectiveness and efficiency at protracted peace support operations while retaining the ability to fight and win two nearly simultaneous major theater wars. Its major downside is expense. The new units would require a significant increase in the defense budget top line. In addition, it could be difficult to recruit and retain the new organizations, and they would have little flexibility.

Conclusions.

The basic U.S. political goals in the Balkans are worth attaining. Stabilizing the region would both help preserve European security and help preserve NATO's leading role. Sustaining the U.S. military presence in the Balkans but focusing on high security and military-to-military engagement would stand the best chance of attaining these goals while assuring that the U.S. military remains able to implement the National Military Strategy.

The Army can take important steps to be more effective in the Balkans. The recent program to clarify and stabilize the deployment cycle and improve personnel policies are examples. Still, many of the things the Army most needs to be more effective in the Balkans are beyond its control. Greater clarity of strategy and policy is one of these. U.S. objectives in Southeast Europe in general and the Balkans in particular are reasonably clear, but what is needed is a concrete statement concerning the long-term involvement and role of the American military. Does the United States

intend to leave its military in the Balkans until Washington's ultimate goals are met, even if this takes years or decades? If the role of the U.S. military is to diminish, how and how soon is this to be done? Will the U.S. military stay involved in civil affairs and nation assistance, or will it become purely a provider of security? What are the indicators of success?

Public opinion data, congressional activity, and the rhetoric of the 2000 presidential campaign all show that support for long-term engagement in the Balkans—for seeing through what has been started—is fragile. Sustaining this support will require persistent leadership from the White House, the Pentagon, and the State Department. It will also require that Army leaders be vigilant in force protection. Taking significant casualties in the Balkans would not automatically lead to American disengagement, but it would certainly complicate the task of retaining public and congressional support for the operations.

The Balkan conflict also shows that NATO needs to find more effective means of deterring, preempting, or responding to politically ambiguous challenges. If the United States stays the course in the Balkans and sees the operations through to ultimate success, NATO is likely to emerge stronger. If the United States loses patience and foregoes its Balkans commitments, this is likely to spark the greatest challenge to NATO since the cruise missile and medium range ballistic missile (Pershing II) controversy of the 1980s, perhaps even a greater one than that. Put bluntly, if the United States abandons the Balkans, NATO will probably begin a slow slide into strategic irrelevance.

Finally, the Balkans operations have shown both the strengths and weaknesses of the United States and its Army. They have shown the immense strides that the Army had made in adapting to the post-Cold War security environment. They have shown that the United States still has an unparalleled ability to organize and lead complex

politico-economic-military activities. They have shown that today's Army, if given sufficient time, can respond to an extensive range of challenges. But they have also shown that sometimes the current Army has difficulty creating the appropriate organizations, doctrine, and methods for new complex challenges. In the Balkans, the Army had to adapt on the fly. This worked, but has not led to *optimal* effectiveness and efficiency. General Shinseki's transformation of the Army may help remedy the problems that come from using units in ways other than what they were designed and trained for, but there is much to do. If President Bush decides that the U.S. military will not become involved in protracted peace operations or that approaching them as a secondary function is acceptable, then the current configuration of the Army is appropriate. But if the trend toward greater U.S. involvement in protracted peace operations continues, the Army and the Department of Defense probably will be forced to relook the way the Army approaches them and consider refocusing units on peace support or forming new organizations.

Recommendations.

To be more effective in the Balkans and in other peace operations, then, the Army should:

- Support a continued U.S. presence in the Balkans until American political objectives are met;
- Develop programs to hand over the maintenance of nation assistance and day-to-day security functions to European and Balkan forces within 2 years;
- Develop a long-term presence in the Balkans to minimize turbulence and to provide a rapid reaction force for crises, serve as a foundation for future peace operations should they become necessary, and provide day-to-day engagement with Balkan militaries as they develop and professionalize;

- Use military-to-military ties, especially education and training, to assist with the development and professionalization of Balkan militaries;
- Seek a modest increase in force size with the bulk of this going to “high demand, low density” units which play a vital role in peace operations;
- Should American political leaders decide to make peace operations an enduring and central function in U.S. strategy, support the formation of dedicated joint and interagency peacekeeping organizations as an augmentation to the existing force.

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